
'ISLAMIC STATE' SYMPATHIZERS GO ON TRIAL IN BERLIN

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The four alleged 'IS' supporters are believed to have known Berlin Christmas market attacker Anis Amri. The trial is expected to offer insights into the Islamist scene in the German capital.

The Berlin Court of Appeals on Thursday began hearing the case involving four suspected "Islamic State" sympathizers who wanted to go to Syria to fight alongside the jihadis.

German law, amended in 2015, outlaws any attempts — successful or not — to leave the country to join a terrorist organization and considers it a "serious act of violence endangering the state."

The men — two Turks, a German Moroccan and a German citizen — are said to have regularly visited the infamous "Fussilet" Mosque in the German capital, suspected of being a meeting point for radical Islamists, including Berlin Christmas market attacker Anis Amri.

Amri, a Tunisian national who killed 12 people and injured dozens more, frequented the mosque, according to authorities. The mosque, which has been under surveillance since 2015 for its suspected links in recruitment activities, was sealed by the law-enforcement authorities last year.

Unsuccessful bid to reach Syria

The men facing trial in Berlin — identified only as Soufiane A, Emrah C., Resul K. and Feysel H., in accordance with German privacy laws — are said to have had no direct links to Amri.

Three of the four suspects were arrested in an anti-terror raid in Berlin in January last year.

22-year-old Soufiane A. was said to have been sent back to Germany by Italian authorities because his identity card showed a ban on leaving the country.

Feysel H. (25), Emrah C. (32) and Resul K. (46) left for Syria in a car belonging to the taxi service owned by C. and K..

Feysel H. was sent back from Croatia also because of a travel restriction on his passport.

Emrah C. (32) and Resul K. (46) carried on and claim to have returned from Turkey after hearing discouraging stories from an 'IS' returnee.

Soufiane A. and Feysel H. are believed to have organized the funds for the trip by using false documents to buy expensive smartphones and then reselling them.

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